

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Reconsideration of this patent application is respectfully requested in view of the foregoing amendments, and the following remarks. Claims 1-7 and 12-13 are in the application. Claim 1 has been amended. Claims 8, 9 and 11 have been canceled. No new matter has been added.

The Examiner rejected claims 1-7, 12 and 13 under 35 U.S.C. §103 as being unpatentable over Stava taken with Stone et al. Claims 8-10 were rejected as being unpatentable over Lisser in view of Starva. Claim 11 was rejected as being unpatentable over Lisser in view of Starva and further in view of Stone et al. Applicants respectfully traverse.

Claim 1 has been amended to state that the welding current is connected only after a defined period after application of a first ignition pulse, so that preionization of the gap occurs between the welding electrode and the workpiece. Support for this amendment can be found in the specification on page 14,

third paragraph. By preionizing the air or gas in the gap, the method according to the invention ensures rapid and reliable ignition of the welding arc. This is because the appropriate charge carriers are already present between the welding electrode and the workpiece when the welding current is turned on.

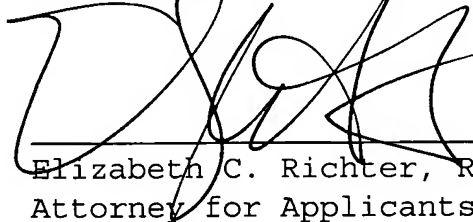
This feature is not taught or described in any of the cited references.

Claims 8, 9 and 11 have been canceled.



Accordingly, Applicants submit that claim 1, and claims 2-7 and 12-13, which depend from claim 1, are patentable over the cited references, taken either singly or in combination. Early allowance of the amended claims is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,
Andreas PRINZ ET AL



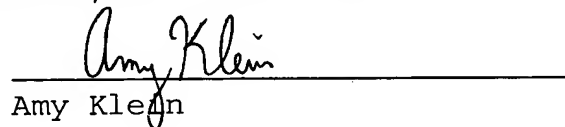
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